Newsletter for Birdwatchers

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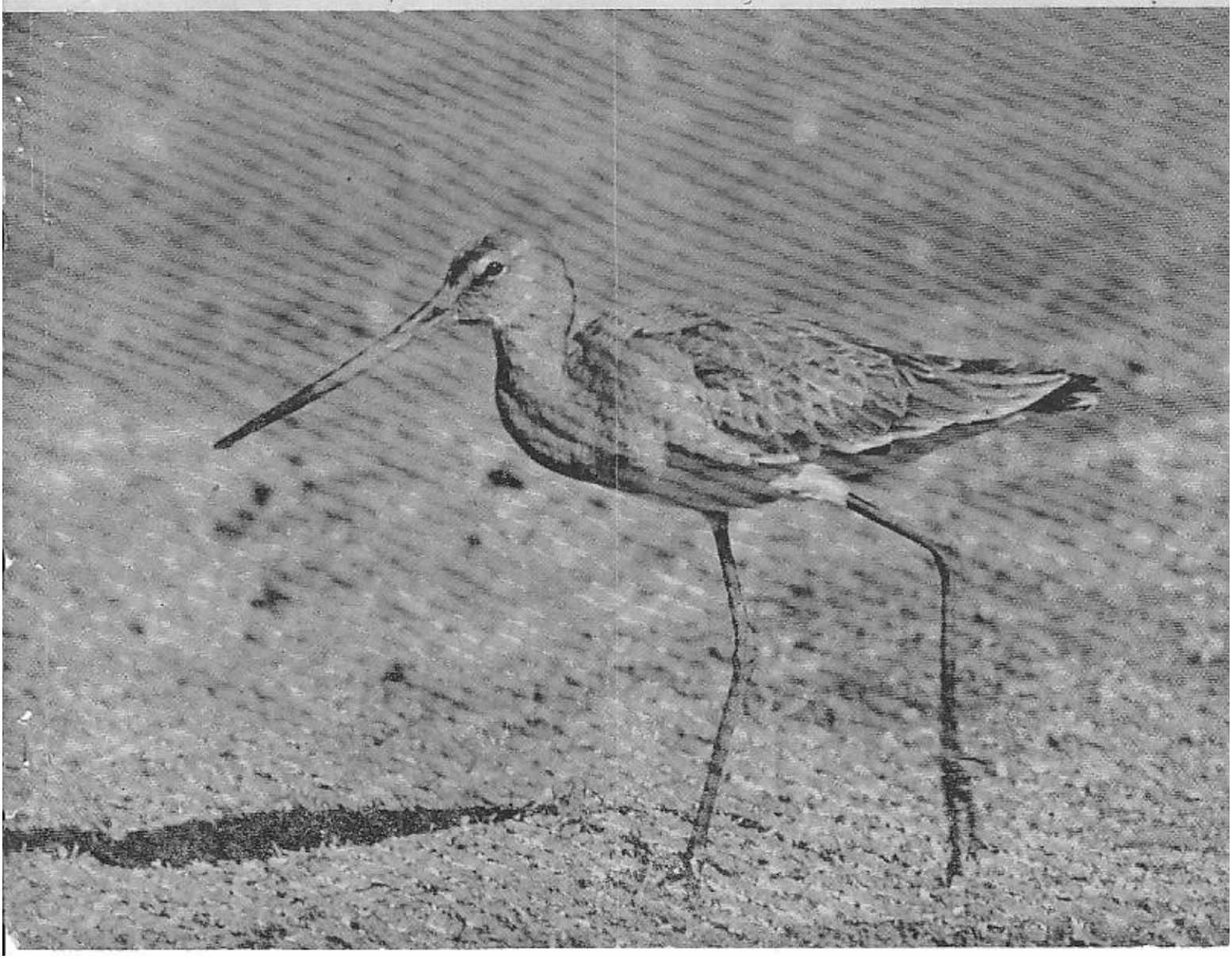

N E W S L E T T E R

F O R B I R D W A T C H E R S

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As I had expected no bird was visible during a heavy shower and birdlife in the garden seemed to be almost extinct. During the period of moderate rain, house sparrows and house crows were seen and the other birds in evidence were Rock Pigeon, Brown Shrikes, Common Myna, Redvented Bulbul, and Tailor Birds. The period of light drizzling, when rain occasionally ceased, was the most productive of all. After the heavy incessant rains a large number of birds emerged from confinement. I saw House Crows, Spotted Dove, Brown Shrikes, Redvented Bulbul, House Swifts, Pied Myna, House Sparrows, a female Koel, a Tree Pie, Roseringed Parakeet, Common Mynas, Tailor Birds, Pariah Kite, Cattle Egrets and a Goldenbacked Woodpecker.

Birding in and Around Hyderabad City by S Ashok Kumar

The A.P. Birdwatchers Club members went birding in Banjara Hills area on 26-10-1980. Capt. NS Tyabji, Hony. Representative, WWF-India and Mr. Pushpa Kumar, Conservator of Forests, Wild Life, captained the team. The group headed eastwards towards a tiny valley. While negotiating the gentle incline of the mound overlooking the valley, we saw a pair of Blue Rock Thrush perched upright on a boulder. It was unmistakable that the blue one was a male and the grey-brown, a female. On a nearby boulder were a pair of Indian Robins silhouetted against the grey sky. Darting across our path we saw a flash of green - the Common Bee-eater with outstretched wings and Pintail. While advancing forward, our attention was drawn to a distant twit-twit call which was undoubtedly that of the Lapwing.

The group continued its trek and found a Black Redstart, obviously a male flitting from one boulder to another. The constant shivering of tail makes its identification easy. While climbing down the valley-side, a pair of Rufoustailed Finch Larks sallied forth, and perched on a shrub across the valley were a pair of Black Drongos. Over the crest of the hill hovered a Kestrel in mid air appearing momentarily stationary. Reaching the base of the valley, we skirted along its side and sighted a singing Bush Lark, the small Indian Sky Lark, Indian Wren Warbler and the Ashy Wren Warbler. The valley terminated in a marshy tank strangely devoid of water birds.

On 9-11-1980 the team visited Palmakole, 15 miles from Hyderabad. We made our way through the fields to the village tank where the following birds were identified, and as will be seen belonged to 21 Families.

Families

Lanidae: Brown Shrike
Motacillidae: Tree Pipit, Meadow Pipit, Yellow Wagtail
Dicruridae: Black Drongo

Muscicaridae: Fantail Warbler, Indian Wren-Warbler, Blyth's Reed Warbler
Charadriidae: Spotted Sandpiper, Little Stint, Little Ringed Plover, Redshank, Marsh Sandpiper, Green Sandpiper
Alaudidae: Ashycrowned Finch-Lark, Sykes's Crested Lark, Redwinged Bush Lark
Ardeidae: Purple Heron, Pond Heron, Little Egret, Smaller Egret, Grey Heron, Snake-bird
Accipitridae: Pale Harrier, Marsh Harrier*, Pariah Kite *Female
Ploceidae: Whitethroated Munia
Recurvirostridae: Blackwinged Stilt
Hirundinidae: Wiretailed Swallow, Common Swallow
Rallidae: Whitebreasted Waterhen, Coot
Burhinidae: Great Stone Plover
Anatidae: Bluewinged Teal, Common Pochard, Tufted Pochard, Spotbill
Laridae: Whiskered Tern
Corvidae: House Crow,
Sturnidae: Common Myna
Meropidae: Green Bee-eater, Bluetailed Bee-eater
Coraciidae: Indian Roller
Pycnonotidae: Redvented Bulbul
Podicipedidae: Dabchick

At the invitation of ICRISAT (International Crop Research Institute for Semi Arid Tropics), the team went birding in ICRISAT campus on 20-11-80. Consisting of a few hundred acres, the Campus provides a good habitat for birds because of its several lakes and varied vegetation. The following (26) varieties of birds were recorded, including a pair of Black Ibis with their spectacular crimson crowns . A lone Marsh Harrier was an unforgettable sight.

Families

Anatidae: Brahminy Duck, Spotbill Duck, Pintail
Rallidae: Indian Moorhen
Accipitridae: Marsh Harrier, Little [illegible]
Alcedinidae: Whitebreasted Kingfisher
Muscicapidae: Blyth's Reed Warbler, Pied Bush Chat, Indian Wren Warbler
Charadriidae: Common Sandpiper, Redwattled Lapwing, Yellow-wattled Lapwing, Greenshank, Plover (Sp.?), Little Ringed Plover, Redshank, Little Stint
Sturnidae: Common Myna
Pycnonotidae: Redvented Bulbul
Threskiornithidae: Black Ibis (2)
Ardeidae: Grey Heron, Pond Heron
Recurvirostridae: Blackwinged Stilt
Falconidae: Kestrel
Apodidae: Palm Swift
Phalacrocoracidae: Little Cormorant (2)

On 9-12-1980 we visited Chilkur village located between the two great lakes of Hyderabad city Himayatsagar and Osmansagar. It was sunny and warm when we entered the enclosed forest reserve of a few hundred acres. The area is chiefly dry thorn-scrub country with boulders. Most of the birds identified are open country birds. It was fascinating to watch a pair of Harriers and a Blackwinged Kite completely dominating the sky above.

Families
Motacillidae: Tawny Pipit
Charadriidae: Yellow-wattled Lapwing, Wood Sandpiper, Little Stint
Campephagidae: Blackheaded Cuckoo-Shrike
Anatidae: Pintail, Wigeon, Tufted Pochard
Psittacidae: Blossomheaded Parakeet
Accipitridae: Pale Harrier, Blackwinged Kite
Hirundinidae: Wiretailed Swallow
Muscicapidae: Indian Robin, Pied Bush Chat
Pycnonotidae: Redvented Bulbul
Columbidae: Little Brown Dove
Recurvirostridae: Blackwinged Stilt
Laniidae: Rufousbacked Shrike, Grey Shrike
Sturnidae: Brahminy Myna
Alaudidae: Bush Lark, Rufoustailed Finch Lark, Crested Lark
Dicruridae: Black Drongo
Coraciidae: Indian Roller
Ardeidae: Pond Heron, Little Egret
Meropidae: Common Green Bee-eater
Tawny Pip

Correspondence

Comments on the Newsletter

I find the lovely Chestnutheaded Bee-eater much in the news. I may point out that the Green Bee-eater often shows a very coppery glint on the head seen at certain angles, and can be confused for the current favourite. The latter lacks the elongated central tail pins, but these can be broken or frayed in the Green Bee-eater. So before shouting Chestnutheaded, do please circle the bird/s under observation. In our part of the country we might be very lucky to get another species to confuse us - the European Bee-eater. This also has a chestnutish head. Both this and the Chestnutheaded have yellow throats contra green or blue of the Green Bee-eater. The European Bee-eater is a rather rare winter migrant or autumnal passage migrant to N.W. India - Gujarat birdwatchers do keep a look out. The Blue-cheeked Bee-eater is another bird to be found in the NW and the very similar Blue-tailed Bee-eater in other parts of the country. Both are considerably larger than the Green Bee-eater. They both lack the chestnut or the coppery shine on the head which is green. So much for the Chestnutheaded Bee-eater - a lovely bird indeed which I hope turns up in my garden but which if it does, I'd think twice before shouting - it could be the European and even then